

TESTIMONY
AN ACT CONCERNING PESTICIDES ON SCHOOL GROUNDS
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The CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) has always made the safety of children its highest priority. Superintendents of Schools and central office administrators realize that we do not live in a risk free world but they make strong efforts to shield children from as many risks as possible. Their goals are to identify all risks associated with school safety and develop comprehensive programs that will manage and mitigate such risks in a safe, reliable and cost effective manner. It is within this context that CAPSS makes the following comments.

Since July 1, 2010, there has been a ban on the use of EPA registered pesticides on the grounds of public schools that serve children from kindergarten through grade eight. Since the ban has been in place, many school fields have been damaged severely and some rendered unplayable, despite the efforts of district staff to maintain these fields using more expensive organic materials and/or labor-intensive manual procedures. Unfortunately, these materials and procedures have not proven effective in addressing pest problems.

As a result, not only have pest populations grown without controls but other unintended consequences have occurred. These include, but are not limited to, invasive plants (i.e. poison ivy), ticks, tree disease, and playing surfaces that are very hard and uneven. All these issues present serious health and safety hazards for children. Any effort to expand the ban on pesticide use to the high school level, therefore, will lead to many more athletic fields and school grounds becoming unsafe and unplayable.

Accordingly, CAPSS, as well as many other municipal organizations, believes that a comprehensive and balanced approach that safely controls pests and addresses all other safety issues is a far better way to ensure the safety of our school children.

CAPSS, consequently, fully supports the U.S. EPA recommended Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to care for all school grounds. IPM is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach that worked very successfully on school grounds prior to the ban and we believe will be safe and effective in the future.